

INDIANA SUPREME COURT COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



TRAINING GRANT ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

October 1, 2008-September 30, 2009

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I. INTRODUCTION

This annual program assessment report is being submitted in accordance with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families program instruction ACYF-CB-06-05. During this reporting period, Court Improvement Program Training Grant funds were used provide judicial education and to provide sub-grants for local, regional and statewide training programs designed to improve the safety, well-being and permanency of children and families in the child welfare system.

II. SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SUPPORTED WITH COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TRAINING GRANT FUNDS

- A. **Annual Juvenile Judges Conference.** The Court Improvement Program sponsored the annual conference held June 18-19, 2009. One hundred eight (108) judicial officers from across the state attended the conference.
- B. **Professional Development Scholarships.** The Court Improvement Program awarded six (6) professional development scholarships to judicial officers with juvenile court jurisdiction to help defray the cost of attending child welfare related trainings, seminars or conferences and/or for the cost of membership in a national child welfare related professional organization.
- C. **Court Improvement Program Sub-grants.** The Court Improvement Program awarded the following sub-grants during this reporting period:

Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division. Funds will be used to help support the 20th Annual Conference on Youth. The annual conference is a multidisciplinary, collaborative conference being hosted by the Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division, Indiana Department of Child Services, Allen County office, Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES and other partners. The conference is expected to draw over 700 attendees for a one-day event featuring nationally known trainers in the areas of positive youth development, strength-based practices, and the 40 Developmental Assets. Workshops and keynote presentations will also be presented on such topics as: Creating Rainbows: An Interactive Approach to Cross-Cultural Communications; Images that Form Leadership Habits and Attitudes; Bringing Out the Best in All Students; Strength-Based Approach to Supporting Families; QPR: Question, Persuade and Respond, a technique for recognizing and dealing with students at risk for suicide and self-destructive behavior.

The Annual Conference on Youth emerged from Judge Charles Pratt's desire to ensure that all agencies working with children and families in Allen County operate with the same strengths-based philosophy that the court espoused.

Funds will also be used to provide ongoing training to court staff, Department of Child Services case staff, GAL/CASA, pauper attorneys, and service providers. Training to be provided by the court include a one day continuing legal education program for guardian ad litem and paper attorneys, Department of Child Services attorneys, and judicial staff. Training on mental health related topics will be provided quarterly for professionals working with the Mental Health Specialty Track Program for Dependency Cases, and judicial staff

will receive training on family engagement practices including Family Group Decision Making, Family Team Meetings and facilitation.

Bartholomew Circuit Court. Funds will be used to host a Children's Summit to discuss local data regarding child abuse and neglect, contributing factors that result in child maltreatment, and to develop community intervention strategies to address child maltreatment. Funds will also be used to produce a video explaining all of the advisements for initial Children in Need of Services (hereinafter "CHINS") hearings and the CHINS facilitation process.

Howard Circuit Court. Funds will be used to provide phase 1 certification training on the Functional Family Therapy Model for the family therapist working in the CHINS Problem Solving Court. Functional Family Therapy is a short-term, evidence based prevention and intervention program that integrates behavioral, system and cognitive intervention strategies to meet the needs of the individual family.

Kid's Voice of Indiana. Funds will be used to provide one free copy of the 2009 Cumulative Supplement to the CHINS Deskbook to the judiciary in each county and to each GAL/CASA Program. The 2009 cumulative supplement will contain over 600 pages of statutes and case law. It includes fourteen chapters comprising all significant changes in CHINS, Termination of Parental Rights (hereinafter "TPR"), paternity, guardianship and adoption since the publication of the first CHINS Deskbook in 2001 and will include statutory changes effective July 1, 2009.

LaPorte Circuit Court. Funds will be used to support the 14th Annual LaPorte County Symposium on Youth. More than 130 local Department of Child Services case managers, probation officers, foster parents, educators, court staff, CASA staff and volunteers, and service providers are expected to participate in the symposium. Symposium participants will be placed in multi-disciplinary groups to discuss issues that are affecting children and families in the county and will come up with solutions for those issues.

Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana, Inc. Funds will be used to provide regional education advocacy trainings to defense attorneys, Department of Child Services attorneys and case managers, GAL/CASA's, foster parents, biological parents, probation officers and court staff.

III. OVERALL PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GOALS DELINEATED IN THE TRAINING GRANT STRATEGIC PLAN

A. Collaborative Training-Statewide

Statewide Summit. During this reporting period, the Court Improvement Program grant administrator and the Child Welfare Improvement Committee began discussing plans for a second summit on children or other collaborative conference to be held in 2010. The details for this event have not yet been finalized.

Development of a Court Room Training DVD. This activity has been completed. In February 2008, the Court Improvement Program and the Indiana Department of Child Services hosted a training program for child welfare stakeholders on Indiana's TPR process. The Court Improvement Program developed a written description of a case and role profiles. The facts and profiles were used to present the case as if it were an actual trial. The training session was videotaped by students from Ball State University's Institute for Digital Entertainment and Education. Final edits to the training video were completed during this reporting period and the video is currently being used by the Department of Child Services to help train new workers. The video will also be made available to other child welfare stakeholders.

Develop/update existing tools for explaining the CHINS court process. The Court Improvement Program Executive Committee awarded a sub-grant to the Indiana Association of Residential Child Care Agencies (IARCCA) to update and distribute two resource guides, "In the Child's Best Interest: A Practical Guide to Assist Parents Through the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) Process." and "In The Child's Best Interest: A Practical Guide to Assist Professionals Through the CHINS process." The Parent Guides are available in English and Spanish. To date, more than 6,500 of the 7,500 English version guides have been distributed to child welfare stakeholders across the state. The demand for the English version guides have been so great that an additional 20,000 copies are being printed. Distribution of the Spanish version of the guides began in September 2009.

The updates to the Professional Guide were also completed and are expected to be available for distribution in November 2009.

Update and revise Education Advocacy Manual for use by child welfare stakeholders. The Court Improvement Program Executive Committee awarded a sub-grant to Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana to update and revise the Education Advocacy Training Manual and to develop a training module for child welfare stakeholders. During this reporting period, revisions to the education advocacy manual were completed and, with the support of the Indiana Office of Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate (GAL/CASA), Education Advocacy training was provided to GAL/CASA's across the state. Additional training will be provided to courts, Department of Child Services staff, foster parents, birth parents and other child welfare stakeholders in 2010.

- B. **Collaborative Training-Local/Regional.** This is an on-going activity. Six (6) sub-grants were awarded during this reporting period to support regional and local training events and other programs designed to improve the child welfare system.
- C. **Judicial Training.** This is an on-going activity. The Court Improvement Program sponsored the annual juvenile judges conference held June 18-19, 2009. The conference provided training sessions on recent legislation, incorporating positive youth development into juvenile justice, and on adolescent brain development. The Court Improvement Program also awarded six (6) professional development scholarships to judicial officers with juvenile court jurisdiction to help defray the cost of attending child welfare related trainings, seminars or conferences and/or for the cost of membership in a national child welfare related professional organization.

D. **Information for Youth in Transition.** This project has not yet been initiated.

E. **Evaluation.** The Court Improvement Program has not conducted a formal study of the effectiveness of training sub-grants, however, sub-grantees are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and submit the results of their evaluations at the end of their grant term. During this reporting period the following program evaluations were received:

Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division. Grant awarded to provide education and training to court staff, Department of Child Services staff, GAL/CASA, pauper attorneys, and service providers. Grant period October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009.

During this grant period the Court sponsored a one day training conference on youth and families issues, provided 6 hours of continuing legal education training to local attorneys, and held five mental health training sessions for professionals working in the Mental Health Specialty Track program.

Elkhart Circuit Court, Juvenile Division. Grant awarded to support a community summit on children and to purchase training DVD's. Grant period July 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009. More than 250 diverse community members attended the summit. Summit participants were asked to evaluate the project and overwhelmingly gave it positive remarks and there was an overwhelming consensus that the summit should be an annual community event. Funds were also used to purchase a set of parenting DVDs that are played while parents are waiting for court hearings.

Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana. Grant awarded to update and revise an Education Advocacy Training Manual, to develop a training module for child welfare stakeholders and to provide Education Advocacy Training to GAL/CASA programs across the state. Grant period July 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009. Revisions to the Education Advocacy Training Manual were completed and eleven (11) regional education advocacy training sessions were held.

IV. ANY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS OR REPORTS OF THE STATEWIDE TASK FORCE

There were no findings, recommendations or reports issued by the Statewide Task Force during this reporting period.

V. RESULTS OF ANY ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES FUNDED DURING THE PROGRAM PERIOD

There were no assessment of activities conducted or funded during this reporting period.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Indiana Court Improvement Program continues to work toward implementation of the strategic plan. The Indiana Supreme Court, Court Improvement Program, Indiana Department of Child Services and the statewide multi-disciplinary task force will continue to work closely to

provide for the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the Indiana foster care system in the upcoming year.